

Kansas Safe Kids Hold Annual Meeting

The Kansas SAFE KIDS Coalition held its annual meeting on Dec. 7. KDHE Secretary Roderick L. Bremby addressed the group and expressed his appreciation for the work of SAFE KIDS. Amy Miller, National Field Organizer for the National SAFEKIDS Campaign in Washington, D.C. addressed the group regarding the new strategies to be implemented by National SAFE KIDS over the next year.

The Coalition also elected three board members: Jeff Halloran, Kansas Safety Belt Education Office; Elena Nuss, Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office; and Cindy Samuelson, Kansas Hospital Association. They join current board members Dennis Cooley, Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics; Randy Bolin, NHTSA Region VII; John Drees, Douglas County SAFE KIDS Coalition; and Jim Keating, Kansas State Firefighters Association.

The Kansas SAFE KIDS Coalition also honored five organizations and individuals who have helped to make more Kansas kids SAFE KIDS during 2004.

"This is a great opportunity to recognize the individuals and organizations in our state that have contributed to the mission of Kansas SAFE KIDS – preventing the leading killer of our children – unintentional injury," said Jan Stegelman, coordinator, Kansas SAFE KIDS.

The Outstanding Coalition Member award for 2004, the highest award given by Kansas SAFE KIDS was presented to Phyllis Larimore of Children's Mercy Hospital - an individual who has demonstrated her dedication not only to Kansas SAFE KIDS but also to the children of Kansas City. Her commitment over the last two years led to the development of the Metro KC Coalition. She is a certified CPS technician, instructor, and Special Needs CPS instructor. She provides much of the special needs child seat training in our state and serves as a resource to Kansas SAFE KIDS in the area of special needs child seats. She coordinated a child safety seat distribution in the Metro KC area that resulted in the donation, distribution, and installation of more than 500 car seats to children in need.

The Outstanding Coalition Organization Award for 2004 was given to the Kansas Safety Belt Education Office, located in Lawrence - an organization that has demonstrated a high level of commitment to the coalition and to the children of Kansas in the area of child passenger safety. They work to coordinate with Kansas SAFE KIDS on Check-up Van and Child Passenger Safety activities including four-day trainings and check up events throughout the state. The agency developed and enthusiastically sponsors the Booster Rooster program. Staff of this organization is certified Child Passenger Safety (CPS) technicians and volunteer much time to personally check seats at many of the events.

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The Pottawatomie/Wabaunsee County SAFE KIDS Chapter was honored as Local Chapter of the Year. During the past year, this chapter expanded their service area to include Wabaunsee County. Through



effective collaboration with partners in both counties they have been active in holding regularly scheduled CPS events. They also have participated in other safety fairs, displays, and presentations encompassing additional target areas to reduce injury to children. The chapter actively pursues grants to help fund their injury prevention programs. They have also created innovative programs to impact their community. One such example involves volunteers who went around to garage sales and provided coupons for McDonalds Happy Meals if the family would give them their used car seat in return rather than re-sell it. Through a recent smoke detector distribution program, 232 smoke alarms have been distributed locally this year. Their dedication to the mission of SAFE KIDS, and their tireless efforts make them a model SAFE KIDS chapter.

The Outstanding Achievement in Child Safety Award was presented to Brenda Gibson of Wichita. Gibson coordinates SAFE KIDS BUCKLE UP events for the Wichita Coalition, recruiting Technicians and other volunteers and garnering support from GM dealerships. In 2000, she initiated a partnership with her employer, the Wichita Clinic, to sponsor car seat checks at six Clinic locations each year. Over the past four years, the Wichita Area SAFE KIDS Coalition has checked more than 3,800 car seats at 60 check events. Brenda has attended at least 50 of these check-up events, and personally checked more than 500 seats. As a member of the Haysville Optimist Club, she became interested in the Optimists' "ABC: Always Buckle Children" campaign and has lead the Wichita Area Coalition in partnering with Optimist Clubs throughout the state to host SAFE KIDS Buckle Up events. (Events are held annually in Ark City, Dodge City, Great Bend, Haysville and Park City in conjunction with Optimist Clubs.) She has made presentations at State and Regional Optimist meetings to promote child passenger safety and partnerships with SAFE KIDS.

The recipient of the Service Recognition Award was Sally Finney, prior member representative from the Kansas Public Health Association. Finney provided leadership to the coalition through service of two two-year terms on the Executive Board. She also provided leadership in the area of child firearm access, and legislative work. This award was presented to Finney during the annual KPHA meeting held in September.